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Honorable Mike McGuire
Chair, Senate Governance and Finance Committee
California State Capitol, Room 408
Sacramento, CA 95814

VIA FAX AND EMAIL

Re: SB 946 (Lara)

Dear Chair McGuire and committee members:

On behalf of the UCLA Criminal Defense Clinic (CDC), we write to express our strong support for SB 946 (Lara) to protect workers and immigrant communities and enhance economic opportunity in California.

As part of UCLA School of Law's Clinical and Experiential Learning Program, the CDC provides an advanced setting to integrate skills, substance, and professionalism through engagement with real lawyering problems. Like other live-client clinics at UCLA Law, the CDC is designed to transfer basic knowledge of the law and familiarity with lawyering skills to the far more complex tasks of working with real clients, collaborating with community groups, and complying with professional obligations. As part of its mission, the CDC takes on individual cases and policy projects to address systemic criminal justice problems. Over the years, the CDC has represented sidewalk vendors who are aggressively criminalized for selling flowers, food, and other items, and also participated in efforts with other nonprofit groups to reform the treatment of sidewalk vendors in Los Angeles.

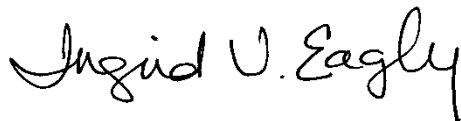
Sidewalk vendors have long been an iconic presence in Los Angeles and other cities throughout the state. They bring healthy food, artwork, flowers, and other things of beauty to our community. Yet, on a daily basis, vendors face harassment by police officers, ticketing, and prosecution that threatens their livelihoods. Our clinic has been deeply disturbed by the treatment of sidewalk vendors in Los Angeles. We have found that vendors' property is seized without warrants and without any avenue for securing its return. Vendors are subject to arrest

and prosecution, and even deportation just for selling their wares. Vendors convicted in these cases are subject to onerous criminal justice debt that, as the poorest of the poor, they are unable to afford. In addition, vendors unable to pay the hefty fees and fines levied against them, or unable to navigate the labyrinth of the courthouse, are issued bench warrants for failure to appear, charged exorbitant interest rates, and harassed by collection officers—further adding to their crippling criminal justice debt and even subjecting them to arrest and incarceration.

SB 946 is a timely and necessary response that could help these vendors throughout the state. SB 946 decriminalizes sidewalk vending, while allowing local jurisdictions to continue to enforce vending rules through non-criminal administrative fines and procedures. SB 946 also encourages local jurisdictions to adopt local sidewalk vending permitting regulations that will protect public safety while promoting entrepreneurship and economic mobility. By encouraging local jurisdictions to support and properly regulate sidewalk vending, SB 946 will help protect California's low-income immigrants and workers, promote safe and regulated vending, and create new opportunity for entrepreneurship and economic mobility throughout the state.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Ingrid V. Eagly
Professor of Law



Julie B. Cramer
Lecturer in Law

CC:

Senator Janet Nguyen, Vice Chair
Senator Jim Beall
Senator Ed Hernandez
Senator Robert M. Hertzberg
Senator Ricardo Lara
Senator John M. W. Moorlach